

Message Text

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51

ACTION EUR-12

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PM-03 NSC-05 SS-15 DODE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 /088 W

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R 031045Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY WARSAW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3635

INFO AMEMBASSY VIENNA

AMCONSUL KRAKOW

AMCONSUL POZNAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L WARSAW 1213

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, ECON, PL

SUBJECT: COMMENTS BY POLISH BISHOP ON POLISH INDUSTRIAL SCENE

REF (A) VIENNA 1704 NOTAL; (B) WARSAW A-122, APRIL 10, 1974

NOTAL; (C) WARSAW 442, JANUARY 21, 1974 NOTAL; (D)

WARSAW 1130 NOTAL

1. WE APPRECIATE AMBASSADOR HUMES'S REPORT OF THE BISHOP OF KATOWICE'S COMMENTS TO CARDINAL KOENIG ON THE POLISH INDUSTRIAL SCENE (REF A). WE HAVE HAD PERIODIC REPORTS FOR OVER A YEAR NOW ABOUT DISSATISFACTION AMONG MINERS IN KATOWICE. THESE INCLUDE RUMORS OF WORK STOPPAGES AND GRIEVANCE MEETINGS. REPORTEDLY, PARTY SECRETARY GIEREK LAST YEAR WENT PERSONALLY TO KATOWICE ON AT LEAST ONE OCCASION TO REFUSE A TENSE SITUATION THERE. WE DISCUSSED THE POTENTIAL CHALLENGE TO THE REGIME POSED BY GRIEVANCES AMONG MINERS AND OTHERS IN REF B.

2. THE REGIME ITSELF HAS REPEATEDLY DEMONSTRATED ITS OWN COGNIZANCE OF THIS SITUATION, PARTICULARLY IN LIGHT OF ITS OBVIOUS DESIRE TO EXPAND COAL PRODUCTION, AND THERE CAN BE
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NO DOUBT THAT IT IS SENSITIVE TO LABOR PROBLEMS AMONG MINERS. THEY WERE AMONG THE FIRST TO GET PAY RAISES IN THE SERIES OF

UPWARD WAGE ADJUSTMENTS INTRODUCED IN JANUARY 1974 (REF C), AND THEY REPORTEDLY GOT SPECIAL INCREASES LAST FALL, IN A SUPPLEMENTARY MEASURE NOT ENVISAGED IN THE ORIGINAL PROGRAM.

3. NEVERTHELESS, THE MINING INDUSTRY IS PLAGUED BY MANPOWER SHORTAGES, HIGH LABOR TURNOVER, AND RELATED PROBLEMS. HIDDEN INFLATION AND CONSUMER SHORTAGES ARE DOUBTLESS ERODING THE VALUE OF EVEN GENEROUS SALARY INCREASES, PARTICULARLY WHEN MEASURED AGAINST ARDUOUS WORK CONDITIONS AND CONTINUOUS PRESSURE TO INCREASE OUTPUT. A SPATE OF FATAL ACCIDENTS LAST FALL PROBABLY SERVED TO DRAMATIZE THESE ISSUES.

4. WE HAVE NO DOUBT ABOUT THE POTENTIAL THIS SITUATION HOLDS FOR SERIOUS TROUBLE TO THE REGIME. INDEED, THE RECENT REMOVAL OF THE FORMER MINISTER OF MINING AND POWER COULD BE READ AS A DEMONSTRATION OF THIS POTENTIAL (REF D). THE BISHOP'S REPORTED REFERENCE TO "SERIOUS AND GROWING UNREST" PUTS THE SITUATION IN STARKER TERMS THAN WE HAD HEARD USED BEFORE BY RESPONSIBLE OBSERVERS; WE ARE NOT AWARE OF EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT SO PORTENTOUS A CHARACTERIZATION.

5. WE HAVE POUCHED VIENNA'S REPORT TO OUR CONSULATE IN KRAKOW AND, WITH THE CONSULATE, WILL CONTINUE TO WATCH THIS SITUATION CAREFULLY.
DAVIES

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